Watergate Figure Gets Immunity

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By Timothy Robinson
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A former employee of billionaire Howard Hughes was granted immunity yesterday to testify before the Senate select Watergate committee.

The committee asked for the grant of immunity last month, but the request was postponed until yesterday at the request of the Watergate special prosecutor.

John H. Meier is alleged to have information relating to Hughes' $100,000 cash gift — later returned — to C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo, a close friend of the President. Meier was an overseer of mining interests for the Hughes firm.

Meier currently is under federal indictment of evading income taxes on more than $250,000, and is being sued by Hughes for alleged questionable business practices.

Meier has denied the charges, saying they grew out of White House ire at his refusal to break off his association with the President's brother, F. Donald Nixon, and nephew, Donald A. Nixon.

Meier's attorneys said yesterday after the hearing that they felt Meier would be "very important and very revealing . . . one of the most valuable witnesses to appear before the committee. . . based on the scope of information and his relationship with Mr. Hughes and Donald Nixon."

"He has an overview of the whole situation . . . a lot of detailed information he can provide," according to attorney Robert Wyashak.